

Message Text

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17

ACTION SCS-03

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FM USINT BAGHDAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2088

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 0634

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC, PINT, IR, IZ

SUBJECT: REPORTED IMPROSONMENT OF AMCIT IN IRAQ

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION BAGHDAD AND BEIRUT MAY 26, 1975, VIA
POUCH, REPEATED FOR YOUR INFO

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L KHORRAMSHAHR 37

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC, PINT, IR

SUBJ: REPORTED IMPRISONMENT OF AMCIT IN IRAQ

REF: A) AMCONSUL KHORRAMSHAHR LETTER OF APRIL 21, 1975

B) BAGHDAD 528

C) AMEMBASSY BEIRUT LETTER OF MAY 15, 1975

1.) CONOFF MET WITH IRANIAN SOURCE MAY 24, 1975 AND
AGAIN MAY 25, 1975 AFTER RECEIPT REF C. IN THESE
INTERVIEWS, SOURCE'S STORY DIFFERED IN SEVERAL RESPECTS
FROM SECOND-HAND REPORT TRANSMITTED REF A, BUT FOL-
LOWING STORY REPRESENTS SOURCE'S BEST RECOLLECTION
AT THIS TIME.

2.) SOURCE WAS TAKEN INTO CUSTODY BY IRAQIS FEBRUARY,
1972 AND IMPRISONED "QASR NASHAYEH (PHONETIC)" IN
BAGHDAD FOR 18 MONTHS. THEN WAS TRANSFERRED "ABU
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Gharib (PHONETIC)" PRISON, THIRTY KILOMETERS NORTH

OF BAGHDAD. IN DECEMBER 1973, HE WAS MOVED TO ANOTHER SECURITY PRISON AT UNKNOWN LOCATION IN BAGHDAD FOR INTERROGATION. SOURCE WAS CONFINED IN LARGE ROOM HOLDING ABOUT 30 OTHER PRISONERS. THERE, OVER COURSE OF FOUR DAYS, HE HAD SEVERAL WHISPERED CONVERSATIONS WITH AN AMERICAN.

3.) IRANIAN REMEBERS ONLY AMERICAN'S FIRST NAME WHICH WAS JAMES AND DESCRIBED HIM AS 6'3" TALL, VERY THIN, BLUE EYES, LONG DARK BLOND HAIR TIED IN BACK WITH STRING. AMCIT SAID HE WAS 23 YEARS OLD, HAD US COLLEGE DEGREE, AND WAS BUILDING ENGINEER/ARCHITECT. HE HAD WORKED IN GERMANY AND HAD ALSO VISITED TURKEY.

4) AMCIT HAD OBTAINED VISAS IN BEIRUT AND TRAVELLED BY BUS TO BAGHDAD WITH INTENTION CONTINUE TO KUWAIT. HE WAS INTERESTED IN SEEING BABYLONIAN RUINS ENROUTE. ARRESTED WHILE VISITING "KASIMI (PHONETIC)" SHRINE NEAR BAGHDAD, HE HAD BEEN IMPRISONED FOR FORTY-FIVE DAYS, HAD BEEN BADLY BEATEN, AND WAS FORCED TO SIGN CONFESSION THAT HE WAS AMERICAN SPY. HE STATED NO ONE KNEW HIS WHEREABOUTS AND SO HE EXPECTED NO HELP. SOURCE DID NOT, REPEAT NOT, SEE AMCIT AGAIN, NOR DID HE LATER LEARN ANY OTHER INFORMATION CONCERNING HIS CONDITION OR WHEREABOUTS.

5) SOURCE AND AMCIT EXCHANGED BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION RELEASED. SOURCE HAS HAD FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH INDIVIDUAL AMERICANS FOR SEVERAL YEARS AND THUS IS WILLING TO VOLUNTEER ABOVE INFORMATION. HE AND SEVERAL OTHER IRANIAN PRISONERS RELEASED APRIL, 1975 AND HE IS NOW ATTEMPTING RESUME FORMER LIFE. HE IS ANXIOUS THAT PROVIDING THIS INFORMATION NOT INVOLVE HIM IN ANOTHER COMPLICATED AFFAIR.

COMMENT: CONOFF BELIEVES SOURCE TELLING STORY AS HE BEST REMEMBERS. TIME AND PHYSICAL SUFFERING MAY WELL HAVE AFFECTED MEMORY, ESPECIALLY CONCERNING DATES. WHEN SHOWN NEWSPAPER PHOTO OF JAMES PENDLETON
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WAGGENER III, HE WAS UNABLE STATE DEFINITELY WHETHER OR NOT THIS SAME MAN HE MET. GENERAL FEATURES MATCH EXCEPT FOR PROMINENT TEETH AS SHOWN IN PHOTO. SOURCE DID NOT RECOGNIZE FAMILY NAME. ALTHOUGH HE CANNOT REMEMBER AMCIT'S HOME STATE, SOURCE DOUBTS IT WAS PENSSYLVANIA. HE WAS PREVIOUSLY FAMILIAR WITH THIS NAME, BUT NOT WITH STATE MENTIONED BY PRISONER. SOURCE WILLING LOOK AT OTHER PICTURES

IN ATTEMPT IDENTIFICATION.

AFTER RELEASE FROM BAGHDAD PRISON, SOURCE WROTE DESCRIPTION OF IMPRISONMENT FOR IRANIAN GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING LIST NAMES OTHER PRISONERS HE MET. HE UNABLE RECALL IF HE MENTIONED AMCIT THAT TIME. OTHER RELEASED IRANIAN PRISONERS HAVE WRITTEN SIMILAR DESCRIPTIONS AND SOURCE FEELS ADDITIONAL INFORMATION MIGHT BE AVAILABLE FROM IRANIAN AMBASSADOR BAGHDAD OR SAVAK, TEHRAN. SIGNED MARSHALL UNQUOTE.
LOWRIE

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